

# In Their Own Words: Stakeholder Perceptions of the Golf World Cup, 2006

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Submitted: 21st July 2014; Resubmitted: 25th November 2014; Accepted: 5th December 2014. e-ISSN: 2014-4458

## Abstract

■ This paper presents a framework for the formulation of a sport tourism event policy for the island of Barbados. Although some research has been conducted on the residents' perceptions of major sporting events including the Olympic Games, smaller but globally significant events such as the Golf World Cup have received little attention from researchers. Less attention has been given to sport events in the Caribbean. This dearth in knowledge has inspired the direction of this study, which is, to explore the stakeholder perceptions of the Golf World Cup which was hosted in Barbados in December 2006. The data collection process adopted included semi-structured interviews with the Barbados tourism private sector.

The 65 participants in this study highlighted a diversity of mainly congruent views. Private sector participants contend that the Golf World Cup was socially exclusive and perpetuated social divisions rather than ameliorated them. Many stakeholders felt that the event was culturally alienating and highlighted the failure of the organisers to undertake stakeholder consultations.

The findings in this study can make a worthwhile contribution to the marketing, management and design of future events and the direction of policy formulation for sport events on the island of Barbados and the wider Caribbean.

### *Key Words:*

Event tourism, Golf tourism, Island tourism

## Resumen

■ Este documento presenta un marco para la formulación de una política de evento Turismo de deporte de la isla de Barbados. Aunque se ha realizado algunas investigaciones sobre las percepciones de los residentes de grandes eventos deportivos como los Juegos Olímpicos, eventos pequeños pero importantes a nivel mundial como la Copa del mundo de Golf han recibido poca atención de los investigadores. Se ha prestado menos atención al deporte eventos en el Caribe. Esta escasez de conocimientos ha inspirado a la dirección de este estudio, que es, para explorar las percepciones de las partes interesadas de la Copa del mundo de Golf que se celebró en Barbados en diciembre de 2006. El proceso de recopilación de datos aprobado incluye entrevistas semiestructuradas con el sector de privado de Turismo de Barbados.

Los 65 participantes en este estudio destacaron una diversidad de principalmente congruentes vistas. Los participantes del sector privado afirman que la Copa del mundo de Golf era socialmente exclusiva y perpetúan las divisiones sociales en lugar de les mejorada. Muchas partes interesadas consideraron que el evento fue culturalmente alienante y puso de relieve el fracaso de los organizadores para realizar consultas con los interesados.

Las conclusiones de este estudio pueden hacer un aporte valioso a la comercialización, la gestión y el diseño de futuros eventos y la dirección de formulación de políticas para eventos deportivos en la isla de Barbados y el gran Caribe.

### *Palabras clave:*

Evento turismo, Golf turismo, Isla turismo

## Introducción

■ Sport tourism has constantly been used as a means of generating significant economic growth through the development of tourist niche markets (Weed & Bull, 2004). For several years the government of Barbados has recognised sports tourism as a means of generating sustainable tourism development (Elcock, 2005). The government of Barbados made it clear at the public launch of the 2007 Cricket World Cup legacy plan that Barbados aims to be the "events capital of the Caribbean". In December 2006, as part of this new tourism thrust, the Barbados Tourism Authority hosted the World Golf Championships - Barbados World Cup (Golf World Cup), an annual event of the Professional Golfers Association (P.G.A). The Golf World Cup was played at the prestigious Sandy Lane Golf Resort in St. James, Barbados. Sandy Lane is recognised as Barbados' most luxurious and prestigious resort. The resort's guests comprise wealthy clients including movie stars, celebrities and royalty (Pattulo, 2005). Sandy Lane has three golf courses, the most famous being The Green Monkey, an exclusive par 72, 7,343-yard golf course.

This study was concerned with exploring the perceptions that local stakeholders had of the Golf World Cup during the time that it was staged in Barbados in December 2006. Since the contents of this paper are considered to be of a sensitive nature these findings could not have been published before in order to protect the informants; hence, the paper provides readers with a trans-historical account of stakeholder perceptions. The stakeholders that were the focus of this study were Barbados tourism officials who are members of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association (B.H.T.A). The B.H.T.A. is a representative organisation of tourism industry businesses and organisations. It serves the mutual interests of over 300 local tourism entities and is the voice of the tourism private sector. The members represent a vast network of private and corporate enterprises, including airlines, restaurants, villa agents, tour representatives and operators, attraction and activity operators, travel agents, cruise services, retailers, trade and consumer press, advertising and public relations agencies, technology providers, consultants, and other suppliers of tourism goods and services.

Although the B.H.T.A. is the representative arm of the tourism private sector, major decisions concerning the marketing and management of Barbados' tourism is mainly the responsibility of the Ministry of Tourism. The marketing arm of the Ministry of Tourism is the Barbados Tourism Authority (B.T.A.) which is headed by a President who reports to a board appointed by the Minister of Tourism. Although the B.T.A. is responsible for many functions, one of its principle roles is to design and implement suitable marketing strategies for the effective promotion of the Barbados tourism industry within international markets. The President, together with the board of directors, are the key decision-makers

of all matters that affect the marketing of Barbados' tourism product. However, although these organisations are fully functional, strategic tourism planning has been a major weakness of these agencies. Wilson (1996) notes that very often in the Caribbean, the scramble for foreign exchange and the need to please foreign investors has precipitated tourism development determined by the short-term fancy of government and its respective tourist boards rather than a coordinated and strategic approach which encompasses the interests of all stakeholders. Unfortunately for Barbados this statement also holds true.

The need for more stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process with regards to event tourism has been echoed by many commentators in the tourism and event planning disciplines (Hall, 1992; Hiller, 2000; Swarbrooke, 2000; Westerbeek, Turner & Ingerson, 2002). Commentators on the political and social implications of staging major events stress the view that the success of these events is dependent on local support and participation (Fredline & Faulkner, 2000; Getz, 1997; Hall, 1992; Hiller 1989, 2000; Twynam & Johnston, 2004; Westerbeek, Turner & Ingerson, 2002). Without local support the host community may display unwillingness to work or volunteer at the event, a lack of enthusiasm in promoting the event and even hostility to visitors (Turco, Swart, Bob & Moodley, 2003). These are consequences that the Caribbean certainly cannot entertain due to the volatile nature of the industry and the tendency of the press to sensationalise such occurrences.

Claims of significant economic benefits from mega events are prominent in the literature. Euro 1996, hosted in the United Kingdom, attracted 280,000 overseas visitors to the eight host cities and surrounding regions (Gratton & Dobson, 1999); while Korea, for the 2002 Football World Cup, attracted over 230,000 foreign soccer fans (Kim & Petrick, 2005). Madden's (2002) evaluation of the Sydney Olympic Games revealed that the games impacted the Australian gross domestic product by AUS\$6.5 billion (£3.25 billion), representing an increase in economic activity of 0.12 percent over a 12 year period from 1994 to 2004; while creating between 5300 to 7500 jobs in an average year over the same period (Madden, 2002: 18). While many tourist destinations have successfully staged mega sport and other types of events, some academics (Hall, 1992; Higham, 1999; Kang & Purdue, 1994; Teigland, 1999) contend that these events, as high profile as they may be, do not always serve the best interest of the stakeholders. This view has called into question the real motives behind the decisions that governments make to invest public funds into the staging of major sport events and the degree of stakeholder consultation that goes into the decision-making process. It is argued that there is usually limited community involvement regarding such decisions and the over-riding of local concerns are justified as being in the national interest in terms of the long or short term benefits that the event can stimulate

for the host community (Cashman, 2003; Horne & Manzenreiter, 2006). One may argue, then, that the staging of a major event is mainly a political affair where politicians seek to achieve specific political or foreign policy goals. They are often instigated by individuals who aspire to be associated with prestigious projects and who appear to be motivated more by the need for political aggrandisement rather than to address any community or stakeholder concerns (Cornelissen & Swart, 2006; Hede & Kellett, 2008). The evidence suggests that in many instances the desire to host major events was guided more by personal and political convictions rather than by an objective appraisal of the project or any robust cost-benefit analysis that takes into consideration the benefits to the host stakeholders and community at large.

There is an alarming body of literature about major sport events failing to meet the expectations of host communities. Historically, major events have resulted in increased debt for the host communities as well as other negative socio-cultural impacts (Higham, 1999; Kang & Perdue, 1994). Hall (1992), Higham (1999) & Hiller (2000) highlighted the tendency of major sporting events to precipitate social and economic displacements in the local community as residents are forced to relocate their homes and businesses due to infrastructure development. Mules & Faulkner (1996) also point out that the hosting of a major event often results in city authorities losing money and such losses have had serious consequences for residents and businesses characterised by taxation levies (Jones, 2001; Whitson & Horne, 2006). Other studies show instances where projected tourism arrivals and revenue were not realised resulting in the under-utilisation of tourist related facilities many of which were new investments initiated by industry stakeholders designed to accommodate the projected tourism overflow but resulting in considerable financial losses (Jones, 2001; Teigland, 1999). Governments try to over-ride negative impacts by stressing the more intangible benefits. Benefits derived from media exposure like the opportunity for place marketing and image enhancement are, not only intangible but also, difficult to measure (Gratton, Shibli & Coleman, 2006; Sealy & Wickens, 2008). Thus, research into the impacts of mega events has pointed out significant gaps between forecast and actual outcomes. Despite these findings the world continues to see a flurry of government officials and dignitaries at the forefront of feverish bidding to host prestigious events on the basis of the benefits that they bring to host communities whether or not the stakeholders concur with the decision.

Tourism planners have recognised the value of the application of stakeholder theory to tourism planning (Buhalis, 2000; Masterman, 2004; Swarbrooke, 2000). No longer can stakeholder theory be just an ethical business management tool but it has become a vital component of management and marketing strategies. Despite this recognition, a major flaw within stakeholder theory is the assumption of homogeneity. Stakeholder groups

are heterogeneous, context specific and hold vastly different missions and value platforms (Buhalis, 2000). Event values differ among the various stakeholders - the sponsors, the community, organisers, the competitors and supporting agencies. Failure or success means different things to different people and can also differ across different geographical locations (Getz, 1997). Very few researchers have explored stakeholder perceptions with regards to event tourism in the Caribbean. This study aims to narrow the gap in such research and to provide a body of conceptual knowledge that can be used in policy formation for event tourism, not only in Barbados but in the wider Caribbean.

### **Barbados and the Island Context**

■ Since island tourism, and more so Caribbean tourism, is conceptually different to tourism in larger geographical areas it is vitally important to understand the context in which this research was conducted. The island of Barbados is located at the southern end of the archipelago that makes up the islands of the eastern Caribbean. It is located at 480 kilometres north of Guyana in South America, 160 kilometres east of St. Vincent, and 965 kilometres south east of Puerto Rico. With an estimated population at 270,000 individuals in 2006, Barbados is one of the smallest, single, sovereign, microstates in the Caribbean (Wilkinson, 1989).

Tourism in island micro states is conceptually different from that which exists in mainland territories that are part of a larger geographical area. In island territories the constraints of size present a number of challenges and Barbados is no different. Challenges presented due to the lack of economies of scale, geographical remoteness, vulnerability to natural disasters and the lack of topographical, human and financial resources precipitates a dependence on foreign capital and services which influences how tourism activity is perceived and managed. Very often there is an innate need to please foreign investors and very often to concede to their wishes in order to encourage investment. Therefore, in Barbados, dependence on foreign capital influences government policy regarding how funding for major tourism projects may be allocated (Tyson, Hayle, Truly, Jordon & Thame, 2005). The colonial history of Barbados also affects how tourism development is perceived by residents and industry stakeholders. Barbados is a former colony of the United Kingdom and its socio-cultural structure and economic development is a manifestation of its colonial past. The hotel industry has often been referred to by historians as the new 'plantocracy' and many have alluded to how management structures in the hotel sector and hiring practices in the tourism industry overall mirror the colonial past (Beckles, 1990; Pattulo, 2005). Today, the legacy of slavery and the plantation society underpins much of the contemporary culture and

values that pervade many aspects of the tourism industry (Lewis, 2002).

Within the last 30 years Barbados has seen the establishment of a range of exclusive golf course developments on the island. Many of these establishments, including Sandy Lane, are institutionally designed to exclude locals. In the Caribbean, golf as a sport, tends to foster negative images. It is perceived as a past-time which is outside the purview of ordinary people and is often viewed as a game that promotes social elitism (Lowerson, 1994; Pattulo, 2005; Readman, 2003; Sinclair, 2005; Swarbrooke, 2000). Consequently golf has a conservative image and is perceived by non-golfers to be the leisure pursuit of the wealthy (Pattulo, 2005).

One of the main concerns in the Caribbean is the local communities' lack of involvement in the decision-making process that dictates the direction of tourism development. Pattulo (2005) drew attention to the tendency of major tourism decisions to be made autonomously by local authorities or trans-national organisations outside the region. The leaders of the tourism industry seem generally unconcerned about the local dimensions of the industry and the type of tourism development that local stakeholders desire. The failure to recognize the importance of stakeholder involvement in the industry is acknowledged in many tourism documents in Barbados but the policies and processes required to ensure meaningful stakeholder participation have not been formalised (Lewis, 2002; Sealy, 2009). This is typical of the event and tourism industries where many event organisers do not undertake stakeholder oriented research, believing in their own ability to know what their stakeholders want (Masterman, 2004). Consequently, many events go ahead as a 'knee-jerk' response to urgent problems and without much, if any, evaluation of cost and benefit projections, community consultation or the relevant consumer research. As a result, many events fail to meet the expectations of international visitors, local residents and tourism and other business enterprises (Sealy, 2009).

While government agencies continue to make decisions regarding tourism development, in Barbados the stakeholder voices are hardly ever acknowledged. Except for newspaper editorials and radio call-in programmes, the voices of tourism stakeholders are hardly ever subjected to empirical consideration by tourism authorities. Stakeholder perceptions of the Golf World Cup were obtained from 65 participants who represented a wide range of businesses who are members of the B.H.T.A. Participants included the senior managers and supervisors of hotels and attractions, small business operators, the retail sector, car rental agencies and sport tourism consultants.

This research aims and objectives were as follows:

- (1) To explore and contextualise the perceptions held of

the Golf World Cup by the tourism private sector stakeholders.

- (2) To establish a policy framework for the development of sport event tourism in Barbados.

A suitable framework for the development of event tourism in Barbados was developed with the use of the following qualitative methods.

## Methodology

■ Field-work was conducted in Barbados during the staging of the Golf World Cup over a three week period in December 2006. A qualitative approach was adopted with the use of 65 semi-structured elite interviews with tourism officials and tourism business owners. The participants were selected from the membership directory of the B.H.T.A. and care was taken to include participants from across a range of business sectors.

Elite interviewing is a technique which is increasingly being used in the event industry (Hede & Kellett, 2008). It is concerned with participants being chosen on the basis of their special knowledge, expertise and experiences in the area of investigation. A semi-structured interview schedule was developed which allowed participants the freedom to reveal their perceptions of the Golf World Cup 2006, with little interference from the researcher. Interviews lasted from 30 minutes to one hour and participants were given the freedom to describe their professional and personal encounter with the phenomenon being studied. At times probing questions were used to further illuminate the categories emerging from the data. The data was analysed using the coding procedures suggested by Strauss & Corbin (1990). Coding is a system used to categorise the data. It assists in identifying patterns and themes by giving them provisional names (Dey, 1993). It is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising the data. The early coding was influenced by 'open coding'. Open coding is the process of developing categories, concepts and themes without making any prior assumptions about what you might discover. The data is broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena being studied (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To this end, the data in this study was examined word-by-word and line-by-line and coded accordingly. After the preliminary coding process a further coding system was employed where codes were related to each other through the identification of core code categories and sub-categories which were then organised and collated into themes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; Robson, 1993).

It is argued that semi-structured interviews leave the re-search open to human error in that poor recall,

misinterpretation or inarticulate responses may distort the data (Yin, 1994). However, in this study, this problem was minimised through the establishment of 'ecological validity' (Burns, 2000) where the researcher was able to forward the transcripts to a select group of informants for confirmation of accuracy (Gibson Wilming & Holdnak, 2003).

As the information contained in the findings is potentially sensitive great care has been taken to protect the anonymity of the respondents. This was done through the anonymous citation of the rich quotes and narratives embedded in this paper. The data from the semi-structured interviews is presented below in the stakeholders' own words and linguistic style. Readers should find the narratives informative and enlightening.

### Private Sector Perceptions of the Golf World Cup

■ The Golf World Cup was held in Barbados in December 2006 at the luxurious Sandy Lane Hotel and Golf Course. The attendance at the event during the week of competition was very poor. The Barbados Tourism Authority estimated that just over 200 persons travelled to Barbados for the competition and, moreover, the event did not receive much support from locals. There were a variety of salient themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews. Consistent with the literature on golf tourism, the private sector participants felt that the Golf World Cup was poorly attended because it conveyed an image of social exclusion (Lowerson, 1994; Pattulo, 2005; Readman, 2003). They also concurred that the Golf World Cup fostered images of social elitism and alienation. A hotel employee explained that because Sandy Lane is usually associated with rich and famous visitors they were not aware that locals were allowed to attend the Golf World Cup. They commented: "...I thought that was for Tiger Woods type people and celebrities...It didn't seem like something that locals would go to....I didn't even know that the general public was invited to the exclusive Sandy Lane".

An inside informant at Sandy Lane confirmed Sandy Lane's exclusive policy as illustrated in this narrative:

*"Before the redevelopment it (Sandy Lane) was a friendlier, more welcoming hotel and you were able to enter without any appointment. Before, we used to get a lot of locals coming through for lunch and as a member of staff you were more relaxed, now you have to watch your P's and Q's. Locals and other tourists can use the beach<sup>1</sup> but they cannot*

*pass through the hotel to do so. The closed-door policy was implemented because this is how the new owners want the hotel to be run."*

A sports official was of the view that the event was designed for a rich, west coast clientele. They commented: "that thing design for west coast people not the mass of the population". Stakeholders thought that the choice of a golf event was somewhat inappropriate due to golf's image as an elite sport. As a hotel manager noted: "..... golf is treated as an 'elite' sport and not an event for 'John Public', so 'John Public' did not attend and there are not enough 'elite' people to attend". They further commented: "People here just see it as a game that rich people play".

The manager of a south coast hotel commented that the event was not designed to benefit the majority of the tourism businesses in Barbados and that it focused on a particularly narrow upper class market. She commented:

*"... it was beneficial to the upscale hotels like Sandy Lane and Royal Pavilion and some of the west coast villas but in terms of guests who would spend money visiting local attractions and restaurants etc. that was not the kind of crowd that came into the island."*

Another industry expert thought that the choice of a golf event only served to perpetuate social divisions in society. They contend:

*"... all I can see these golf courses doing is creating more and more areas in this island that are off-limits.... Areas where I used to play as a child have now been developed and fenced in for only those who can afford it."*

A local supplier of hotel goods noted that the Golf World Cup would not have been well supported and was certainly an inappropriate choice for a major event because it bore images of the island's colonial past. She commented:

*"They promoting the snobbery and divisions of the past by hosting it at Sandy Lane. They need to remember that they are still old people living in their 100s or 90s whose grandparents or even parents would have told them tales of slavery. That is still our recent history and the hotel is reminiscent of that. Golf too is seen as a white man sport and they promoted it as high end. My husband even says that they could never get him to go even if they pay him. People were calling into the call-in radio programmes saying that they did not want that about here."*

A car rental agency manager expressed the view that the Golf World Cup was mainly a Sandy Lane event that benefited only Sandy Lane. They claimed: "Barbados does not need any promotion, it is already well known. This event is a Sandy Lane event geared towards Sandy Lane guests and it promotes Sandy Lane and no one else".

<sup>1</sup> All beaches in Barbados are public and it is law that all owners of beach front property leave a public right-a-way for access to the beach.

Other private sector participants expressed concern about how the event was marketed. They drew attention to key words in the promotional literature and newspaper reports such as "high end" "prestigious" and "star studded". Many participants were of the view that the marketing strategy sent the wrong messages. As this sports operator explained: "They get about here and pitch this thing as if they only wanted rich and famous". A local hotel owner was quick to point out that they were not surprised by the poor attendance considering the direction the island's tourism marketing campaign has taken:

*"Barbados has not been able to attract 600,000 long-stay visitors this year because of snobbishness in its marketing campaign (...) We are promoting snobbishness in our tourism marketing strategy. We are just looking at the people with the big bucks..."*

A south coast hotel owner was particularly vocal about the message that the Golf World Cup was portraying. They claimed that the Golf World Cup served to benefit the luxury west coast establishments but did nothing for south coast budget properties. They claim:

*"Well I don't know who is supposed to benefit from this golf but I can tell you who ain't benefiting. My hotel running at 50%. The golf event is evidently for just the luxury west coast properties. I think they will be the ones to benefit along with the west coast restaurants and transportation services. If we are going to try to attract events to Barbados, I really think that they need to go after events that have a wide market base so that all can benefit, not just a few – it sends the wrong message."*

The tourism private sector participants expressed congruent views about the lack of public consultation in the decision-making process for tourism and events and the need for reform. A sports operator commented:

*"Authorities here tend to make decisions without doing proper research or public consultation. Everything seems to be secretive. These events are high-risk events and to this day no studies have shown any tangible rate of return. These people always keep the public in the dark about these things."*

Other research participants noted the lack of consultation with the host community regarding the decision to host the Golf World Cup. This businessman noted:

*"Man, the Prime Minister doing as he like. They don't consult the people about nothing; they just get in they big houses and think up these things without any thought of how they will affect the people. ...When I think of all the money they wasting without proper consultation as to what the people want."*

Some hoteliers noted that they were not even aware of the Golf World Cup being held in Barbados. This was

particularly alarming since many hotels bundle key Barbados events and attractions into their accommodation packages and marketing strategies. An owner of a west coast luxury property noted that the communication between the tourism decision-makers and the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Association members need to improve. They commented: "I did not know about the Golf World Cup until I ran into the minister and he said to me 'you gearing up for the golf?' and I said 'golf, what golf?'"

Tourism business persons also questioned the relevance of the Golf World Cup for Barbados considering that golf was not part of the local culture. One tour representative commented that in her business it is very difficult to sell golf packages to tourists. She explained:

*"I find it hard to convince anybody to play golf. The tourists think that golf is for the old, rich and retired or just is boring (...) the people that I deal with prefer cultural activities rather than playing golf (...) The tourists want culture not something that they can get at home."*

Other participants questioned the cultural relevancy of this event with comments like:

*"That is not our culture. (...) People are not going to find this attractive (referring to the golf). Golf is not the culture here, they do not understand it. You have to develop cricket, football and road tennis..."*

Cultural relevancy was an on-going theme throughout the semi-structured interviews with the private sector. A hotel manager noted:

*"It puzzles me that they would bring an event like this to Barbados and expect it to be financially viable. I mean it doesn't make sense considering that 99% of Bajans<sup>2</sup> don't play golf."*

Private sector members commented on how the event lacked local appeal. There were no associated fringed events or entertainment that would have made the event distinctly Barbadian or attract tourists. A sports operator commented:

*"This golf just don't have any appeal (...) The government went about this thing all wrong. If they want to develop sport tourism in this country they need to do so holistically (...) At football for instance, we get people involved by providing a range of attractions to get the people out. We have the dancers and cheerleaders, the DJ and you know one time we even had 'Crossfire' perform<sup>3</sup>, but this event is bland, real bland."*

<sup>2</sup> Bajan is a colloquial term for Barbadian.

<sup>3</sup> 'Crossfire' is a popular 'soca' band from Barbados. 'Soca' is the traditional music of Barbados.

A tourism official when questioned why the event was not more 'Barbadianised', they commented that the P.G.A. control over the event prevented them from adding additional features. They noted that:

*"I know that the event did not have a Caribbean flavour but there are restrictions that prevented us from doing more than we did... I mean you even have rules as to where you can put a banner so any entertainment, cultural events would have been out of the question... We had to comply with all sorts of rules and regulations (...) We had to put our welcome booth in a specific space as dictated by the P.G.A., we were restricted as to where we could display our promotional materials, signs and banners and we could not even conduct a survey with visitors."*

A representative of a food concessionaire for the event explained that the lack of local food available on the golf course was due to the instructions of the P.G.A. who requested that a more continental menu be served. When questioned about the non-traditional menu items on offer to visitors, they commented bluntly: "The P.G.A. set the menu".

One notable theme that was the focus of much discussion was the absence of Tiger Woods and other prominent golfing icons from the event. A local sports administrator, commenting on the small crowd, felt that the poor attendance was due to the non-appearance of Tiger Woods. He commented: "I think things would have been different if Tiger Woods was appearing. You would certainly have gotten more people. To not have Tiger Woods is like having a test match at Kensington without Lara, Gale, Chanderpaul and Sarwan". Another private sector participant was also of the view that the poor turnout was due to the absence of the big names. She claimed:

*"There was an expectation that some of the big names would participate, and at the last minute we were told that they were not coming - those persons who were interested (local and international), changed their minds."*

Many private sector participants made reference to Tiger Woods' absence with statements like: "I not going ... Well Tiger Woods ain't there", "Tiger Woods would have made a difference" or "I would have gone to see Tiger Woods". A local tour operator who organises golf tours commented that golfers have their followings, so people would travel to see individual players perform rather than national teams. The Golf World Cup is unique in the sense that it is a team competition, unlike other P.G.A. tours or golf tournaments, which are individually contested. This operator explained:

*"People are not going to come from America just to see American golfers. They want to see the stars. If the stars are not performing they are not going to bother. Tiger has a special gathering. He has 50/50 fans. 50% will travel*

*anywhere to see him succeed and the other 50% want to see him fail."*

Narratives about the non-appearance of Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Jim Furyk and Retief Goosen represented a common trend throughout the course of the semi-structured interviews. Participants concurred that the event lost much of its prestige, credibility and appeal due to the non-appearance of these golfing icons and questioned the authorities' decision to go ahead with the event in their absence.

The private sector participants were asked what type of events they thought would benefit the wider business community. Participants tended to favour sports directed more at mass audiences. One participant commented:

*"Get football, basketball and hockey so that low-end hotels can also benefit. Football is a global sport and would attract fans from all over the world. They need to develop facilities for other sports where money can be made. They need to stage events so that the whole country can participate."*

This hotelier noted that the tropical weather should be the impetus from which events can develop. He commented:

*"Water sports, surfing, anything like that are fun... beach stuff... beach volleyball if possible... would fit with the tropics... surfing as well... it would make sense to hold them here..."*

Data from the semi-structured interviews showed that residents had mixed views about the benefits of the Golf World Cup to the community. Those who supported the event expressed views that were consistent with the work of Waitt (2003) who identified civic pride amongst local communities as one of the positive outcomes of hosting such events. Others commented on their effectiveness in building awareness and in promoting Barbados in specific markets (Getz, 1997; Hall, 1992; Westerbeek, Turner & Ingerson, 2002). It is on this basis that some participants gave their support to Barbados hosting the Golf World Cup. Some participants, despite expressing some disinterest in this particular event, were of the opinion that the Golf World Cup was good for Barbados in terms of the publicity that the island was getting in the international media. One participant commented that "the island looks really nice on ESPN and they have been showing you Harrison's Cave and other island attractions. This is really good for Barbados because of the media promotion". Another participant commented:

*"Hopefully all this attention would dispel the myth about us being a third world country. Many tourists come here thinking that we are primitive but now they can see for themselves that we work hard and are prosperous like everybody else."*



A tour operator mentioned that it was particularly pleasing to see Barbados being the focus of international attention: "now they will see that this is a modern country". They noted "this is a modern country, it's well developed, people overseas will see that now". They further commented: "we prefer this to the type of promotion when the Barbados Tourism Authority brought travel agents to Barbados a few years ago and gave them spending money. We didn't like that at all". Similarly, another participant agreed that: "the three million spent to bring the event here is nothing; you will make that back in no time, just from the promotion alone".

Other research participants expressed scepticism about the benefits derived from hosting the Golf World Cup. For instance, a hotel owner questioned the value of all this publicity. They commented:

*"Hosting these things is good for the Caribbean but I question the money. Will we see the benefits? It is nice seeing Barbados promoted, it promotes Barbados and the Caribbean but at the end of the day what will we gain in the long-term? For instance, if the Indians watch it will they then visit Barbados?"*

Another participant thought that hosting the Golf World Cup on the basis of promoting Barbados was unnecessary. They noted: "Barbados does not need any promotion, it is already well known..... Barbados needs to be careful with all this promotion if not the island would become common. The beauty of Barbados is, it is a little secret to be discovered".

Some participants felt that there were more pressing areas where the money should be spent. This sports operator commented:

*"They are spending a lot of unnecessary money, they just getting bout here and wasting taxpayers' well-earned dollars. There is nothing wrong spending money for development but it should be spent where it is most needed. For instance the Barbados Football Association needs a new stadium so that we can develop football which is the sport of the majority of people but instead they promoting Sandy Lane. Sandy Lane could look after itself."*

The foregoing presentation of the data highlighted the most salient themes that were extrapolated from informants. The integration of these issues into a frame-work for the management of event tourism in Barbados and their implications forms the context of the next discussion.

## **Discussion and Recommendations**

■ A framework for the development of public funded event tourism in Barbados must be established along

several dimensions. One of the major considerations for event tourism planners is that they must avoid events that alienate local residents and businesses. Many local hotel owners expressed the view that the Golf World Cup was a Sandy Lane event, for Sandy Lane guests and that Sandy Lane and the luxury west coast properties were the only beneficiaries. Many industry partners perceived the Golf World Cup as an elitist event, catering to an exclusive, mainly wealthy international clientele and therefore perceived it as socially exclusive. A policy for the development of event tourism in Barbados must adopt an all-inclusive approach to the staging of international events. The event objectives must satisfy a diversity of stakeholders along a range of business sectors. This could be achieved with the development of an event portfolio (Getz, 1997) where a variety of events are staged throughout a given year that are specifically directed at satisfying the interests of a variety of stakeholder groups rather than focusing on a particularly small niche market. The decision-makers must develop harmonistic and synergistic goals that serve the interest of a wide range of businesses while at the same time satisfying the needs of the tourists and event owners.

Research participants expressed the view that public consultation should be part of the decision-making process for event tourism. Some participants felt that the lack of public consultation and poor communication about the Golf World Cup created the perception of secrecy and resulted in a lack of transparency about the decision to host. The foregoing narratives illustrate the need for tourism planners to involve the local community in all aspects of tourism development. Events do not take place in a vacuum but within a particular social, economic and cultural context that needs to be integrated into the tourism development plan if these events are to be successful (Sealy, 2009). The tourism authorities need to implement an effective local communications campaign aimed at raising the level of awareness of tourism development projects with more industry and public contribution forums. The evidence suggests the need for more integrating and systematic public evaluation processes for event tourism in Barbados. A social impact panel should be established for every event to assess social impacts and to conduct consultations with special interest and stakeholder groups in the community.

Participants in this research commented that the Golf World Cup held no cultural relevance to the local society. They concurred with the view that Barbados does not have a golfing tradition and that golf is more perceived as a tourist activity. Participants noted that the Golf World Cup lacked activities that reflected local traditions and customs. The sport tourism development framework must make accommodation for the cultural traditions of the host community to be respected and considered during the screening process for international events (Shone & Parry, 2004). International events should only be chosen on the basis that their objectives are in alignment with



the local agenda and the owners of these events should be sensitive to local needs and customs. Otherwise they should be told to take their event elsewhere.

When dealing with international event owners, the local organizing committees should be more assertive about how the event will be organized and designed. The discovery that the P.G.A. exerted much influence and authority over how the event was delivered is alarming considering that the host authorities paid US\$3 million to the P.G.A. to host the event. Local organizing committees should impose a 'if we pay then we must have some say' approach to dealing with these often autocratic international organizations. Policy should dictate that local organizers only work with international event owners who demonstrate a desire to engage with the destination ethos and provide the impetus for the host destination to achieve its social and economic objectives. Hede & Kellett's (2008) research into the relationship of local organizing committees and international event owners revealed a shift in power where event owners are having to become more savvy in selling their events due to the plethora of events that can be bid for. Many of these alternate events are of the size and scope that can be better leveraged to enhance the host's capabilities to achieve its goals. Local authorities need to appreciate that international event organizations need to sell the licensing rights to their event to a host authority in order to offset the costs that they incur. This gives local organizing committees a considerable amount of bargaining power. It is on this basis that local authorities need to assert their influence on international event organizations in order to ensure that host communities are compensated adequately for their investment (Hede & Kellett, 2008).

Many participants thought that there would have been a better spectator turnout had Tiger Woods been competing. The Golf World Cup was projected to attract over 8000 foreign visitors to Barbados during a traditionally slow period of the tourist winter season; however, the event attracted significantly less tourists and spectators than initially projected (Spooner, 2006). While tourism officials declined to comment officially on the actual numbers in attendance an inside source revealed that a meagre 200 persons came to the island for the event comprising mainly press, P.G.A. officials and a few tourists. The failure of the Golf World Cup to attract the projected number of tourists to the island was the subject of much debate and controversy in the media during the course of this research. The overarching view amongst participants is that the event might have lost some of its attractiveness and credibility due to Woods' non-appearance. It is the principle role of sport organizations to market their event to the best competitors (Masterman, 2004) however it was felt that the P.G.A.'s failure to do this might have cost the destination money. Local organizing committees need to insist that organizations like the P.G.A. deliver the 'goods' by ensuring that the well-known names are competing in the competitive element of their event

– particularly if the event is pitched as the World Cup of the sport. In the future clauses to this effect must be written into the bid contract.

Informants who supported the Golf World Cup did so on the basis that the event enhanced Barbados' international image. Participants indicated that they felt a degree of civic pride from the attention that Barbados was receiving in the international press. This evidence suggests that event tourism authorities must continue to leverage all events to achieve these aims. More important, the impacts derived from the media coverage can be leveraged to stimulate resident's 'buy in' and support for events which is necessary to ensure their success.

## Conclusions

■ The success of any event hinges on its ability to attract spectators. Destination marketers need to understand and appreciate the factors which influence tourists buying behaviour and motivation to take the time, effort and expense to travel to an international event. There will be many influencing factors such as the time of year, the destination, cost and available distribution channels. The strategic timing of a one year lapse between the decision to host this event and when it was actually delivered may well have been too narrow a window to allow all of the necessary marketing communications directed at potential visitors and local stakeholders to take place. The fact that P.G.A. events take place regularly within the United States may also have been a contributing factor to the poor spectator turnout as Americans may not have been motivated to travel overseas to consume a product that they can get closer to home.

While the world continues to see feverish bidding for mega events in developing countries, perhaps small islands can explore other more financially viable options. Barbados should consider utilizing its creative resources more effectively to design and deliver a Barbados brand of mega events. Gibson (2003) notes how events that are inspired from within host communities have been more successful than international 'bid-for' events on the basis that they influence greater community participation, they resonate more with the ethos, culture and values of the host environment and they can make the destination more distinctive and attractive to potential visitors. Locally inspired events would give organizers more decisive control over their design, theming, production and delivery elements. They will also be perceived as less intimidating and less socially exclusive to stakeholders due to local ownership. The Barbados Crop-Over festival which attracts mass local participation, approximately 100,000 visitors every year and injects £20 million plus in foreign exchange into the local economy is a case in point (Holder, 2003). With internet streaming technology these events can be broadcast to a global audience for a fraction

of what it would cost to purchase the corresponding advertising time through traditional television networks. Over time these new brand of events will eventually become globally recognized hallmark events and attract mainstream media coverage.

There are certainly several lessons to be learned from this Barbados case study. It must be recognized that international events with high prestige profiles are not necessarily a panacea for attracting visitors or remedying falling visitor arrivals and, perhaps in the island context, may be unsuitable due to remoteness and lack of economies of scale. As with this Barbados event the 2004 P.G.A. Tour, Korea Golf Championships on Jeju island, also failed to attract the anticipated number of spectators and quality players to guarantee a successful event (Lim and Patterson, 2008). The researchers noted that stakeholders did not consider this event successful due to limited opportunities for marketing and promotion and it was felt that the main financial beneficiaries were the P.G.A and other American companies.

It is evident that all events must be subjected to rigorous cost-benefit analyses in the context of their host environment so that the appropriate leveraging strategies can be employed to ensure that objectives are met. It is clear that that benefits from hosting major events do not flow naturally and that any benefits that are to be accrued must be strategically integrated into a community engagement and destination marketing plan. Before bidding it is necessary to conduct accurate social and economic impact assessments along with public consultations if major sport events are to gain public support and become more democratically accountable ventures.

By 2014 after the hosting of two major events - the Golf World Cup and the Cricket World Cup - Barbados tourism is said to be in crisis recording an overall fall of 8.2 per cent across all markets resulting in the disbandment of the Barbados Tourism Authority and the formation of the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. (Caribbean Tourism Organisation, 2014). There is evidently the need for a more coherent body of knowledge on event tourism in Barbados. While this investigation has focussed on a specific group of stakeholders, there needs to be further investigation into the perceptions of the visitors, travel trade, media, community groups and all other groups that form the mirage of stakeholders in Barbados' tourism and event industries.

The findings in this study demonstrate the usefulness of qualitative research and that Barbados needs to focus their inquiries on more investigations of this nature to better inform event tourism policy in Barbados. This needs to be collated with other forms of stakeholder research including quantitative assessments in order to appreciate the complexities of this phenomenon and to integrate the stakeholder perspective into the tourism

development plan. The findings in this study can make a worthwhile contribution to the marketing, management and design of future events and the direction of policy formulation for sport events on the island of Barbados and indeed the wider Caribbean.

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## Biographical Notes

■ Dr. Wendy Sealy is Senior Lecturer and Programme Coordinator for the BA (Hons) Event Management in SEMAL. Dr Sealy has worked in the corporate event industry for over 20 years and has served in senior managerial positions for Marriott Hotels and Resorts in Barbados and the USA. She was also Groups and Incentives Manager for Almond Beach Resorts and the General Manager of Island Magic Barbados. She has

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Dr Sealy was educated at the University of the West Indies where she gained a first class honours degree in History and Sociology. She later completed her masters degree in Tourism Marketing with distinction at the University of Surrey and her Doctor of Philosophy degree with Brunel University, London. Her doctoral thesis is concerned with the role of the stakeholder in the management and design of mega events. She has published with the Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing and her research interests include event design, stakeholder engagement and embedding experiential learning into event degrees.

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